

USFA Y2K NEWSLETTER

This issue of the USFA Y2K Newsletter is focusing on the Y2K readiness of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP), also known as 911 Centers. At the request of the Emergency Services Sector of the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion, the USFA has been gathering and analyzing information on the efforts of PSAPs to prepare for the millennium transition.

Nationwide 911 Readiness Report

50 States Contribute to Survey

The USFA partnered with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and the Department of Justice to gather information from 911 centers during the first six months of 1999. Many of you were contacted (maybe even more than once) and responded. Your input and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

We received over 2200 responses, from all 50 States. 37% say they are Y2K compliant as of the end of June 1999. Another 55% say they will be compliant by the end of the year. In total, 92% expect to be ready before 1 January 2000. Among those centers that did not indicate that they will be compliant by the end of the year, the most common barriers identified were:

- ✓ Uncertainty about the reliability of support functions such as power and telephone companies.
- ✓ The lack of funding for upgrades of equipment.
- ✓ The reluctance of vendors and manufacturers to provide compliance statements.

An area of concern is that only 55% have contingency plans in place. With or without compliance of mission critical systems, a contingency plan is vital. It is essential that communities have backup plans to ensure public access to critical services in event of a disruption. //

The President's Council web site:

www.y2k.gov

FCC and USFA Partner to Promote Awareness

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and the USFA were tasked by the Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem to contact state Y2K coordinators to promote awareness of the Y2K compliance status of PSAPs and encourage action to address the local readiness issues.

On July 13, 1999, Mr. Michael Powell, Defense Commissioner of the FCC, sent letters to each State, which included:

- ✓ An Overview of the Readiness of Emergency Communications
- ✓ FCC Data on Readiness of Small and Medium Sized Local Telecommunications Carriers by State or Territory
- ✓ A List of Known 911 Centers
- ✓ A List of Respondents to Survey

The letter included a summary of the overall national readiness of PSAPs, as described in the opening section of this newsletter. However, specific information on individual center responses was not provided //

For additional information, the FCC Y2K Task Force can be contacted by email at year2000@fcc.gov or by phone (202) 418-2379 or web site at www.fcc.gov/year2000. //

Contingency & Consequence Management
Planning for the Year 2000 Conversion

A Guide for State & Local Emergency Managers

☎ Call 888-USA-4-Y2K

or

Download at: www.fema.gov/y2k/ccmp.htm

Getting Ready for Y2K: A Workshop for
Emergency Management

Information for the emergency management community

☎ Call 888-USA-4-Y2K

or

Download at: www.fema.gov/y2k/ccmp.htm

Public Safety Sector Y2K Readiness

On July 7, 1999, the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion convened a roundtable meeting that brought together members of the public safety community. Representing the 911 community was W. Mark Adams, Executive Director of the National Emergency Number Association. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the Y2K readiness of the public safety sector and to increase communication among sector participants. Roundtable participants agreed on the following key points: Federal and State public safety organizations are relatively well prepared for the date change. However, there is uncertainty about the level of preparedness and contingency planning being done locally.

Communities should:

- ✓ Anticipate the possibility of contingencies such as weather and holiday crowd problems that may be exacerbated by Y2K-related difficulties.
- ✓ Establish relationships with neighboring jurisdictions to provide for back up in the event of unanticipated system failures or overloads. Databases containing public safety points of contact from surrounding jurisdictions can be helpful. Regional Y2K plans can also help communities to coordinate date rollover activities.
- ✓ Develop inventory of volunteer personnel. In many instances, single individuals fill more than one role in providing public safety services. If needed in one role, the individual may not be available to serve in other capacities.
- ✓ Develop protocols for prioritizing emergencies through contingency planning and tabletop exercises.
- ✓ Consider public education campaigns to inform citizens about the appropriate use of available emergency and information lines. Local information lines for non-emergency calls can reduce the likelihood for overburdening 911 systems.

Community leaders in business and government should participate in public forums for discussing community Y2K readiness with citizens. //

Y2K Questions? Information to Share?

www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/

(301) 447-1328 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. EST

USFA Y2K INFORMATION OFFICE

16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727

PSAP Y2K Best Practices

Emergency Service Providers Prepare Their Communities for Y2K

At this point in time, getting ready for Y2K may mean focusing resources on your backup plans. Even if your systems are compliant, a contingency plan is an absolute necessity. There are many practical ideas already being implemented across the country. Many communities are informing citizens of direct dial numbers for hospitals, fire departments, police, etc. If people know these numbers, they can still connect with emergency services if 911 isn't working or is overburdened. Dallas, TX is publicizing their 311-information number for non-emergency calls. Several communities are enlisting the help of local ham radio operators to serve as backups to the 911 system. Others are coordinating "relay teams" where personnel are placed at easy access points throughout a community. They then can relay the call for appropriate emergency service response and/or provide basic services on site.

The following are examples of local community creativity in preparing for potential Y2K disruptions. If you have ideas to share, let us hear from you at the Y2K Information Center, (301) 447-1328.

Aztec, NM - San Juan County Communications. Their organization has a plan that uses a propane backup generator that self tests every week and two Uninterrupted Power Supply Units (UPS). The generator cascade plan includes manual transfer switch capability in the event that a failure occurs in one unit. They are working with their telecommunications provider to assure open phone lines to the center in event of commercial power failure.

Dothan, AL - The Dothan Fire Department will host a regional operations Y2K response drill on August 16th. Participants from response agencies in AL, FL and GA will simulate a regional Y2K event involving all emergency service providers, city departments, utility providers and outside agencies. The City EOC and Media Information Center will be activated. The airport annual FAA tabletop drill will be included as part of this training event. For information about this drill or tips on conducting one in your region: (334) 793-0372 or Firechief@Dothan.org //